

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ADP-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 NIC-01 RSR-01 /118 W

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R 160938Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7371

INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USINT CAIRO

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SUBJ: ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS VISIT

REF: MANILA 8932

SUMMARY: GOP PROGRAM FOR VISITING ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS
DELEGATION INCLUDES MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT MARCOS AND SENIOR GOP
OFFICIALS AND TRIP TO MINDANAO AND SULU. EXTENSIVE MEDIA CAMPAIGN
ON MUSLIM AFFAIRS PRECEDED MINISTERS' ARRIVAL. COMMENT: GOP, WHICH
IS SEEKING FAVORABLE REPORT AND POSSIBLY ISLAMIC WORLD ECONOMIC
AID FOR PHIL MUSLIM MINORITY, IS GOING ALL OUT TO IMPRESS UPON
VISITORS SERIOUSNESS OF ITS PROGRAMS TO AMELIORATE MUSLIM MINORITY
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PROBLEM AND TO ATTEMPT DISPEL ANY LINGERING BELIEFS THAT GOVT IS

OPPRESSING PHIL MUSLIMS. END SUMMARY.

1. FOURTEEN-MEMBER ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS MISSION ARRIVED MANILA AUG 14 AND 15 TO LOOK INTO CONDITIONS OF PHIL MUSLIM. GROUP INCLUDES SOMALI FOREIGN MINISTER OMAR ARTEH, SAUDI ARABIAN FOREIGN MINISTER OMAR SAKKAF (PLUS SEVEN), LIBYAN FOREIGN MINISTER ABDUL ATI AL BAIDI (PLUS ONE), SENEGALESE AMBASSADOR TO EGYPT MUSTAPHA CISSE AND TWO MALAYSIAN ASSISTANTS TO TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF ISLAMIC INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT.

2. VISITORS CALLED ON PRESIDENT MARCOS ON AUG 15 AND RECEIVED BRIEFING FROM SENIOR GOP OFFICIALS ON PEACE AND ORDER, RELIEF AND REHABILITATION AND CIVIC ACTION PROGRAMS OF GOVT IN MUSLIM AREAS OF SOUTHERN PHILS. STATE DINNER WAS HELD SAME EVENING. GROUP LEFT AUG 16 FOR MINDANAO AND SULU. THEIR ITINERARY WILL TAKE THEM TO SOME OF THE MORE TROUBLED AREAS, INCLUDING JOLO, BASILAN, ZAMBOANGA CITY AND COTABATO. THEY WILL STAY OVERNIGHT IN RELATIVELY UNTROUBLED MARAWI CITY AND MAY GO TO LANA DEL NORTE AND MISAMIS ORIENTAL PROVINCES.

3. PRESS ACCOUNTS OF MEETING OF DELEGATION WITH PRESIDENT REPORT THAT MARCOS EXPLAINED MUSLIM INSURGENCY AS PART OF NATIONAL PROBLEM CAUSED BY PAST INJUSTICES OF "FEUDALISTIC" PHIL SOCIETY WHICH PRESENT GOVT REFORM PROGRAM SEEKING TO CORRECT AND STRESSED MUSLIM CONTRIBUTIONS TO PHIL CULTURE. VISITING MINISTERS REPORTEDLY STATED PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF THEIR VISIT IS TO OFFER ASSISTANCE OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE TO GOP AND TO IMPROVE RELATIONS BETWEEN PHILS AND MUSLIM COUNTRIES. THEY SAID THEY HAD NO INTENTION OF INTERFERING IN INTERNAL PHIL MATTERS.

4. ARRIVAL OF DELEGATION WAS PRECEDED DURING PAST WEEK BY EXTENSIVE ATTENTION IN CONTROLLED MEDIA TO MUSLIM AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS FOR BENEFIT OF MUSLIM MINORITY. MUCH PUBLICITY WAS ALSO GIVEN TO AUG 12 MEETING OF PRESIDENT MARCOS AND SENIOR GOP OFFICIALS WITH 68 MUSLIM "LEADERS," WHO REPORTEDLY PLEDGED SUPPORT OF PHIL MUSLIM COMMUNITY FOR MARCOS AND HIS REFORM PROGRAM AND AGREED TO MEET WITH VISITING ISLAMIC DELEGATION. MARCOS PROMISED TO USE HIS MARTIAL LAW POWERS TO FULLEST TO ACCELERATE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSLIM AREAS.

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5. COMMENT: GOP CLEARLY HOPES TO PERSUADE MISSION TO MAKE FAVORABLE REPORT AND WILL PROBABLY ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM ISLAMIC CONFERENCE NATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF MUSLIM AREAS OF PHILS. GOVT WILL ATTEMPT TO INSURE THAT VISITORS WILL HAVE FEW OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE INDEPENDENT OBSERVATIONS; THEY WILL BE CAREFULLY ESCORTED BY GOP OFFICIALS AND EXPOSED ONLY TO THOSE AREAS, PROJECTS AND INDIVIDUALS WHICH GOP FEELS WILL ENHANCE ITS CASE. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT AT LEAST SOME MEMBERS OF MISSION WILL GET LESS

SANGUINE IMPRESSION FROM UNOFFICIAL CONTACTS. (FYI THERE ARE RUMORS THAT MUSLIM INSURGENTS, WHO CONTROL MOST OF SULU PROVINCE, MIGHT LAUNCH ATTACK ON JOLO CITY COINCIDENT WITH BRIEF STOP THERE BY MISSION. END FYI.)

6. EXTENSIVE GOVT-INSPIRED MEDIA TREATMENT ON MUSLIM AFFAIRS IN PAST WEEK LARGELY REITERATES PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED PROGRAMS WHICH FOR MOST PART ARE STILL IN PLANNING STAGE. EXCEPTIONS SEEM TO BE ESTABLISHMENT OF 100 MILLION PESO "MUSLIM BAND AND CREATION OF SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL RESEARCH STAFF TO RECONCILE TRADITIONAL MUSLIM LAW WITH NATIONAL LEGAL STRUCTURE. AUG 12 MEETING ALSO SEEMS PART B CONTRIVED ATMOSPHERE PREPARED FOR BENEFIT OF VISITORS, AS MUSLIMS PRESENT WERE NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF INSURGENT GROUPS AND THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE CHANGE IN SERIOUS INSURGENCY SITUATION IN SOUTHERN PHILS.
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